

RECORDS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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concerned with the archival or research value of the files. Many records to be safeguarded have no lasting value, but their value at the onset of an emergency cannot be questioned.

Experience has indicated that certain personnel are so familiar with existing problem areas and carry so much program knowledge in their heads that they have not given sufficient attention to records which should be at the relocation site. They overlook the twin facts that in time of emergency they themselves may not reach the relocation site, and that people not so well acquainted with their activities may have to take over. Records at the site should be usable by others.

(2) Specific Categories of Vital Records

(a) General Management Records

Vital records include statements of mission in an emergency, plans and programs for carrying out this mission, statements of delegations of authority and of succession of command, any predrafted regulations or announcements to be issued immediately upon the onset of an emergency, action programs that may have been drafted in skeleton form, information as to the

whereabouts of vital records, information about agency personnel, property, and activities sufficient to provide a basis for damage assessments, and similar information on essential emergency functions. Copies of basic legislation, regulations, and procedures are often included, even though many of these would be rendered at least temporarily inoperative in an emergency.

(b) Personnel Records

Among the personnel records most frequently designated as vital, in addition to lists of key employees assigned emergency duties, are rosters of employees and rosters of employees' skills that might be useful during and following an emergency. There should be a prearranged reporting system for personnel available for duty and those ^{who} ~~which~~ are casualties.

(c) Legal Rights Records

In general a distinction has been drawn between records that support legal rights which might be reestablished through affidavit and ~~which~~ are well known to those involved, and records of legal

rights maintained by the Federal Government as the statutory office of record, particularly if it is unrealistic to expect those involved to know the details of the records.

Real estate titles, for example, have in the past been reestablished after loss of records, and usually departments and agencies know what real estate the Government owns. Furthermore, there are inventories of Federal land holdings, with copies dispersed in various locations. Finally, the Federal Government is not the office of records for real estate titles; they are registered in local court houses. Where the Federal Government is the office of record for legal rights---citizenship, for example---it has a primary responsibility for their protection. Rights of employees to earned leave and pay ~~due them~~ should be safeguarded through copies of periodic payrolls and key leave records. Equity in retirement funds for employees should be safeguarded as such information is not usually known by the employee.

(d) Fiscal Records

There has been no effort to provide vital records copies of all the fiscal records of the Government

simply because it would be too unwieldy and expensive. Most departments and agencies have safeguarded copies of periodic summaries of their financial status, records of significant amounts of money due to the Government, and records of certain debts owed by the Government. For the most part, however, no effort has been made to safeguard copies of all fiscal records relating to procurement; it is up to the seller to preserve what he might need to prove his claim.

On the other hand, the Government tries to safeguard a record of loans it has made in order to collect, if collection would be possible after an emergency. In the handling of fiscal records the same factors and motivation prevail in the Federal Government as in state and local governments and in private industry. Owing to differences in the respective missions of Government and private industry, however, different records are chosen.

(e) Assigned Mission Records.

In determining what are indispensable records of activities peculiar to individual components, each must of course make its own decision in the light of

the emergency mission for which it is responsible. The records designated will be greatly influenced, however, by whether the emergency mission is simply a continuation of a normal peacetime program or is instead a completely or nearly completely new program. If the emergency mission represents continuation of a normal program, copies of those records that show the current status of the program should be safeguarded.

Records showing the location of stocks of supplies may be of the utmost importance; records of building construction and of public utility systems may be essential for repair and rescue work as well as for determining the relative safety of structures still standing.

Background ^{records} ~~material~~ as to how work was done in previous emergencies, or how it should be done, should be safeguarded.

Small stocks of forms used to accomplish the mission, reports required, regulations, procedures, and particularly, critical evaluations of the success of comparable predecessor programs, would be vital. They will be all important in getting the program off to a fast and effective start.

There are additional problems in correlating the selection of vital records by central offices and field offices. As a rule, there is no need to safeguard the same information from both places. On the other hand, a certain amount of duplicate information is required at central offices and field offices.

b. Summary Documents and Supporting Documents

In selecting documents for the vital ^{records} material program, it is not always possible for a single document or classification of documents to stand alone for they may be of a summary nature or may be updated on a periodic basis. Therefore, certain other supporting or current transaction documents must be selected for deposit for continuous updating. A simple example is the manner in which invoices are needed to keep an accounts receivable ledger actively functioning.

~~c. Providing Vital Material Copies at Creation~~

~~Once identification and selection has been accomplished it is essential that vital material deposit copies of active transaction-type records be made available for deposit at creation or at each updating transaction.~~

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